

The Election Judges who operate the polling place are a very important part of the electoral process. These persons are the only contact the Board of Elections has with the general public during voting hours, and they are responsible for administering the actual voting procedures in each precinct. Without these individuals, it would be impossible to conduct an election.

All Election Judges must make sure that qualified voters are able to cast their vote in a trouble-free environment. They represent the entire electoral process and may be the only person a voter has contact with when exercising his or her franchise. Therefore, the Election Judge must be reliable and courteous, present a neat appearance, be able to follow procedures exactly, and, above all, possess good judgment.

TYPES OF ELECTION JUDGES:

Chief Judges: In each voting precinct, a Democrat and Republican Chief Judge are appointed. On election day these individuals are employees of the Board of Elections who share equally the responsibilities of managing the polling place. Their responsibilities include making sure all their workers are ready for election day business, checking that machines are delivered and that the telephone is operating in the polling room, opening the polling place on time, guaranteeing that all procedures are followed in the polling place on election day, supervising the precinct tally of voters and ballots cast after the close of the polls, seeing to it that all forms are properly completed, delivering the voting results on election night, and returning the supplies and reports to the Election Office. Should a question arise as to the way voting progressed in a precinct, both Chief Judges are held accountable.

Election Judges: Those assisting the Chief Judges in a polling place are called Election Judges. The number of registered voters in each precinct determines the number of judges assigned to each precinct. All Judges assist in opening the polling place, and at the end of the day, canvassing the results of the vote. The Chief Judges will assign specific duties to each Judge. Various duties include the processing of voters, processing provisional voters, manning the DRE voting units, and acting as a demonstrator of the voting process. Election Judges are under the direct supervision of the Chief Judges.

Alternate Election Judges: The individuals appointed as Alternate Election Judges play a vital part in the electoral process. Judges must be appointed months before an election, and sometimes situations arise where a Judge cannot fulfill his/her obligation (sudden business changes, death in the family, etc.). The Alternate Election Judges receive the same training as other Judges, but are on standby until after the elections are held. The Board of Elections may call upon an individual serving in this capacity to fill

a vacancy prior to an election or on election day itself. It is important that one accept appointment as an Alternate Election Judge only if he or she intends to be available, should the need to serve arise.

TERM OF OFFICE:

Election Judges are appointed biennially (Article 33, Section 10-203 of the Annotated Code of Maryland) thirteen weeks prior to any regularly scheduled primary election and serve until after the general election. Therefore, each person accepting appointment as an Election Judge should be available for the primary and general election to be held in a given year.

QUALIFICATIONS:

1. An Election Judge must be a registered Democrat or Republican in the State of Maryland. In larger precincts, unaffiliated and/or those affiliated with a minority party may serve as Election Judges.
2. An Election Judge must be able to speak, read, and write the English language.
3. An Election Judge may not be a candidate, campaign manager for a candidate, or a treasurer for a candidate or political committee.
4. An Election Judge must be physically able to work continuously throughout the entire day, 6 a.m. through approximately 9 p.m.
5. An Election Judge may not engage in partisan or political activity while on duty in a polling place.
6. An Election Judge may be 17 years old. These individuals are too young to be registered voters but must meet all of the other qualifications for registration in the county.

COMPENSATION:

Chief Judges are paid \$175 for each day served. Election Judges are paid \$140 for each day served. Alternate Election Judges are paid the same salary as the person for whom they substitute. If an Alternate Election Judge is not called to step in for an Election Judge, they will be paid \$35.00 for serving standby.

TRAINING SESSIONS FOR ALL JUDGES:

Chief Judges, Election Judges, and Alternate Election Judges will receive \$30 as compensation for taking a mandatory course of instruction, except that such compensation will not be paid if the Judge refuses to serve on Election Day, unless excused by the Board of Elections. Payment for the training session will be included in the regular paycheck for election day work.

SHOULD IT BE NECESSARY TO RESIGN:

An Election Judge who finds it necessary to resign must send his or her written request stating the reason for not serving on election day to the Board of Elections. The Board will make a determination as to the acceptability of that request.

ELECTION JUDGES WORKING OUTSIDE THEIR HOME PRECINCT:

All persons employed by the Board of Elections who are unable to vote in their home precinct may vote by absentee ballot or at one of the three early voting sites. Election Judges who are assigned to work outside their home precinct may complete the absentee ballot application that will be included with their letter of appointment. Sometimes, however, it is necessary to fill last-minute vacancies with Election Judges who live outside of the area of the polling place in which they work. It is incumbent upon those individuals to call the Board of Elections and request an absentee ballot. Every effort will be made by the Board of Elections to send an application and an absentee ballot.

INTERESTED?

If you wish to be considered for Election Day appointment, please contact the Harford County Board of Elections at 410-638-3565 between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m.

HARFORD COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS

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HOW TO BECOME AN ELECTION JUDGE

Types of Election Judges

Term of Office

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